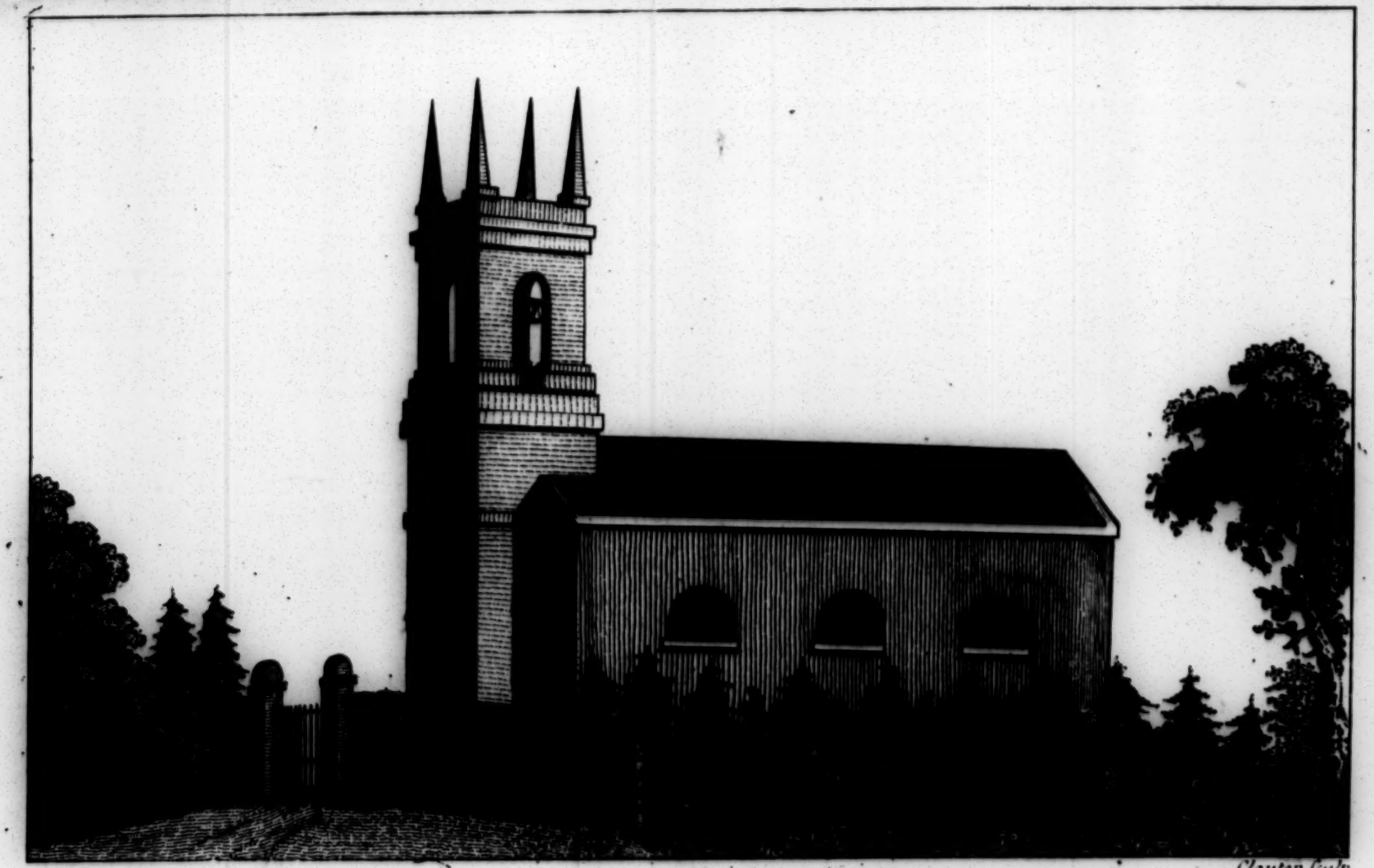

Clayton Sculp

A Perspective View of St. Luke's Gallowns

Hib. 5. 794. 2

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

NEW CHURCH of St. LUKE's, GALLOWN,

On Sunday the 6th of October 1793;

WHEN

A COLLECTION WAS MADE,

IN ORDER TO EXTEND THE BENEFITS OF

A CHARITABLE LOAN OF FIFTY GUINEAS,

ALREADY LENT OUT TO

INDUSTRIOUS HOUSE-KEEPERS OF THE PARISH OF GALLOWN.

By THOMAS CAMPBELL, L.L.D.
CHANCELLOR of ST. MACARTIN's, CLOGHER.

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M.DCC.XCIV.

Solomon built him an Houſe. Howbeit the Moſt High dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands. Acts vii. 47.

Iter hujus ſermonis quod ſit vides: ad res publicas firmandas, ad ſtabiliendas vires, & ſanandos populos, omnis noſtra pergit oratio.

CICERO, de Legibus.

08-435

TO THE

MOST REVEREND, RIGHT HONOURABLE, AND RIGHT REVEREND

THE COMMISSIONERS AND TRUSTEES OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF IRELAND.

MY LORDS,

YOUR liberal aſſiſtance, in the accompliſhment of a favourite wiſh of my heart —the accommodating a very extenſive pariſh with a ſecond houſe of prayer—claims my grateful acknowledgments. And whilſt I take this opportunity of returning them, let me not intercept the thanks of a congregation, not leſs numerous than that of the mother church.

Your Lordſhips muſt feel the glow of benevolence on the reflection, that there are now *five* churches, where there was only *one* in the days of my predeceſſor, the Dean of Roſs: who was incumbent of an union, divided into four rectories, by the care of the late worthy dioceſan, Doctor Garnett. For, if neither ſuperſtition nor fanaticiſm

naticiſm be the characteriſtics of theſe times, and if outward worſhip be but the emanation of inward piety, this fact affords a preſumptive argument, that rational religion is not ſo much on the decline, in this country, as peeviſh declamation would inſinuate.

And when it is known, that, of thoſe *five* churches, *three* have been erected by the aid of Firſt-fruits, the world muſt join with me, in aſſociating the praiſe of the inſtitution, ſo well conducted by your Lordſhips, with the immortal name of him, who was ſo inſtrumental in turning its fund into the preſent channel.

I am your Lordſhips moſt dutiful,

And humble ſervant,

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

A

DISCOURSE,

&c.

NEHEM. VIII. 10.

Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.

REVELATION has confirmed the dictates of reaſon, that God is a ſpirit, and is to be worſhipped in ſpirit and truth. But we frail creatures, formed, as we are, of ſoul and body, muſt glorify the Creator, not only with our ſpirit, but our body, which are God's.

It is true, that the outward forms of worſhip may be obſerved, where devotion never penetrates the heart; but, without a due attention to outward forms, the inward homage of the ſoul would ſoon, and generally, decay. Religion and virtue were never yet the characteriſtics of any people who have lightly regarded eſtabliſhed ordinances.

If we never fall upon our knees in public, we may neglect to fall upon them in private: and if we never fall upon our knees, either in public or private, we may at length neglect to "bow down the knees of our hearts."

But how important the frequency of public worſhip is, will, perhaps, be beſt ſeen from the want of that frequency, even among that very people who were ſeparated, from all other nations, for the very purpoſe of keeping alive a pure worſhip of God, unmixed with idolatry.

It was the praiſe of Moſes, the leader of the Hebrews, that "he was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians." Yet were theſe Egyptians, thus extolled by St. Stephen, ſunk into the groſſeſt idolatry: and with their ſuperſtitions were the children of Iſrael deeply infected. As a remedy, were the ten commandments, modifying the original laws of nature, written, on two tables of ſtone, during their ſojourn in the wilderneſs.

Of theſe ten, the unity of the Godhead was firſt enjoined; and the prohibition of images held the ſecond place. Yet ſo devoted to the abominations of Egypt were theſe Hebrews, that "they gathered together unto Aaron, and ſaid unto him, up! make us gods which ſhall go before us; for as for this Moſes, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron ſaid unto them, break off the golden

ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your ſons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me. And all the people break off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hands, and faſhioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a golden calf. And they ſaid, theſe be thy gods, O Iſrael! which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*."

Now, was it not extraordinary that Aaron, the brother of Moſes, who, together with his ſons, had been ſet apart for the prieſthood, ſhould have been prevailed on, by theſe deluded people, to ſet up the image of a calf for a God, and build an altar before it? Yet ſo it was. It is, however, incredible, that Aaron, ſenſible, as he muſt have been, that his brother acted under the more immediate influence of heaven, could be

* Exodus xxxii.

be ſo ſtupid, or ſo depraved, as to worſhip this idol in his heart. We muſt, in charity, ſuppoſe that he temporized with the multitude; that vile rabble, who ſtill ſmelled rank of the leeks and onions of Egypt.

And ſo, indeed, he himſelf more than inſinuates: for when Moſes rebuked him for the ſin he had committed, he excuſes himſelf in the following manner*: "Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knoweſt the people, that they are ſet on miſchief. And I ſaid unto them, whoſoever hath any gold let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I caſt it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

All which plainly intimates, that he hoped to divert them from their fooliſh and wicked intention, by alarming their vanity and avarice. But herein he was diſappointed: for their ſuperſtition

* Exodus xxxii. 22.

ſition prevailed, not only over their love of gold, but of their finery. Both the men and the women, the wives and the daughters, gave up their coſtly ornaments, thoſe precious embelliſhments of their perſons, that they might worſhip the likeneſs of a beaſt that eateth hay.

Upon which obſerve, that the Iſraelites, being in their paſſage to the promiſed land, had at this time no fixed place of worſhip. They had only a tabernacle, or moving tent, carried along with the ark, which contained the covenant, or tables of the law. The obſervance of the ſabbath was, however, particularly enjoined a ſecond time: and ſo ſevere were both Moſes and Aaron againſt the tranſgreſſion of this precept, that they ſentenced a poor man to be ſtoned to death, who had been found gathering ſticks on the ſabbath-day*.

But,

* Numb. xv. 36.

But, notwithſtanding this ſevere penalty, inflicted in the days of the lawgiver, we hear little or nothing more of the ſtrict obſervance of the ſabbath after the death of Joſhua, who was the immediate ſucceſſor of Moſes; and, in the very next generation, the Iſraelites are charged with the moſt ſhameful idolatries; and ſo continued to be till the building of the temple by king Solomon; a ſpace of near five hundred years.

Now here let us pauſe a moment, to aſk—could this have happened if each ſeventh day had been employed in ſpiritual exerciſes, and devout meditations, upon the being and attributes of the Creator?

But the truth is, the fourth commandment required only reſt from work or bodily labour on the ſabbath-day. And it is equally true, that, however well the lawgiver provided for the maintenance of the prieſthood, he did not ſo amply provide for the inſtruction

of

of the people. It was not ſufficient for this purpoſe, that a * ſacrifice of two lambs was to be offered every ſabbath-day; nor was it enough that † the law ſhould be read over *once* at the end of every *ſeven years*. We accordingly find, that Jehovah was worſhipped by the Iſraelites rather as a tutelary deity, who delivered them from Egyptian bondage, than as the creator, governor, and preſerver of the univerſe.

As the tabernacle may be conſidered as a moving temple, and the temple as a fixed tabernacle, it is natural to expect, that the erection of this edifice would have ſerved the intereſts of religion. And ſo indeed it did. For after the dedication of that houſe to the Lord (which was performed in a very ſolemn manner), Solomon "offered his burnt-offerings

* Numbers xxviii. 9.

† Deuteronomy xxxi. 10, &c.

offerings, on the altar which he had built before the porch, according to the commandment of Moſes, on the ſabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the ſolemn feaſts, three times a year." *

But, even then, the ſabbath was kept as a day of reſt, not of public devotion; and the infrequent reading of the law, once in every ſeven years, was as incompetent to inſtruct the whole people in its principles, as the building a ſingle temple was to purify their corrupt worſhip. Accordingly, we find that the ſervice of the temple produced no permanent reformation in the religion, even, of the builder himſelf. Seduced by the multitude of his wives and concubines, he eaſily relapſed, in his old age, to thoſe idolatries in which he had been educated. For in his youth he made affinity with the king of Egypt, and as the people burned incenſe, and ſacrificed in high places, ſo did he:

 "The

* II. Chron. 8. 12.

" The king offered a thouſand burnt offerings, at the great high place which was at Gibeon." *

Upon the death of this king, ten, out of the twelve, tribes, revolted from his ſon Rehoboam, and ſet up Jeroboam in his ſtead. Thus were formed the two ſeparate kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael; which rendered bad worſe; for the whole kingdom of Iſrael perſevered in idolatry, till its final diſſolution; nor was all the authority, of thoſe few good kings they had, ſufficient to aboliſh it in the kingdom of Judah. They not only burned incenſe to the golden calf of Aaron, and the brazen ſerpent of Moſes, but they ſacrificed their very children to Moloch; and the temple, which ſhould have been conſecrated to the inſtruction of the people, was polluted with the moſt indecent practices.

At length, in the reign of Joſiah, when that pious prince was repairing the

* I. Kings 3. 4.

the temple, which, then, after being miſuſed for four hundred years, had fallen into decay, " Hilkiah the prieſt found a book of the law of the Lord: —and Shaphan the ſcribe carried the book to the king, and read it before the king :—And it came to paſs when the king had heard the words of the book of the law that he rent his clothes.—— Then the king went up into the houſe of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and the prieſts and the Levites, and all the people great and ſmall; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the houſe of the Lord." *

From the circumſtance of king Joſiah's rending his clothes at finding the book of the law, it is to be preſumed, either, that that one was the original, or the only copy then in exiſtance; and of courſe that the people muſt have remained, all this while, in

 deplorable

* II. Chron. 35. 16.—30.

deplorable ignorance of its particular contents.

Joſiah died not long after, of a wound, which he received in battle againſt the king of Egypt; and with him expired the obſervation of the law for twenty-two years; during which all the chief of the prieſts and the people polluted the houſe of the Lord with the abominations of the Heathen *. "Therefore the king of the Chaldees was brought upon them, who had no compaſſion upon young man or maiden, or him that ſtooped with age in the ſanctuary: he burnt the houſe of the Lord and brake down the wall of Jeruſalem, and them that eſcaped the ſword he carried away to Babylon, where they were ſervants to him and his ſons until the reign of the kingdom of Perſia." †

During

II. * Chron. 36. 14.
† II. Chron. 36. 20.

During this captivity, it can hardly be ſuppoſed, that any great progreſs was, any where, made in the knowledge of the law of Moſes. However, after ſeventy years, they returned to Jeruſalem, under the proclamation of Cyrus, who had conquered Babylon; and began to lay again the foundations of the Temple: which, after many interruptions and impediments, thrown in their way, they at length completed. And as afflictions generally humiliate into piety, they now reſorted to the ſtudy of their law. Then "Ezra the prieſt, a ready ſcribe in the law of his God, gathered the people together in the ſtreet which was before the water-gate; and he brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with underſtanding. And he read before them from morning to mid-day, and the ears of the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra the ſcribe ſtood upon

upon a pulpit of wood, which they made for the purpoſe, and he was above all the people. And Ezra bleſſed the Lord, the great God, and all the people anſwered, Amen. Amen." *

Thus do we aſcend to the origin of preaching; not very unlike that which is practiſed at this day. This, to be ſure, is a matter rather of curioſity than of uſe; but it concerns us all to know what was the ſubject of his diſcourſe. And upon inquiry we find that " Ezra read the law diſtinctly, and gave the ſenſe, and cauſed them to underſtand the reading." For in order to inculcate duties, he found it neceſſary, not only to explain paſſages which were obſcure, but words which were obſelete: obſelete, not only from the changes incident to all languages, in a long lapſe of time, (and the law was then above a thouſand years written) but from the corruption

* Nehemiah, chap. 18.

ruption, which the original Hebrew muſt have ſuffered, in the mouths of a multitude, ſo long accuſtomed to the Chaldee tongue.

But what moſt deſerves our notice is, that though Ezra began his diſcourſe by an exhortation to thankſgiving, for their deliverance from bondage, he goes on to recommend charity, in the words of my text, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared." Thus, may it without exaggeration, be ſaid, that the firſt ſermon, ever preached out of a pulpit, was, in ſome meaſure, a charity ſermon.

If this ſlight ſketch, of the Jewiſh ſtory, ſhould appear tedious, as not directly tending to the charitable purpoſe of our meeting, it may perhaps find an apology in the reflection, that it is not foreign to *our particular* ſituation, aſſembled, as *we* are, in a *new* church, erected for the main purpoſe of your

greater

greater convenience, in attending public worſhip. Which circumſtance, if rightly conſidered, ſhould bring home, to your feelings, the advantages of having, in every quarter, decent houſes of prayer; with conſcientious miniſters, wiſhful to aſſiſt their congregations in doctrine, in precept, in diſcipline, making the word of God a commentary on his works.

This review of the ſtate of a people, ſelected for the conſervation of the true worſhip of God, yet contaminated by all the abominations of idolatry, ſhould, moreover, make your profeſſion of chriſtianity appear ſtill more lovely in your eyes; reformed as it is, among us, and reſtored to its primitive purity, as a reaſonable ſervice of ſpiritual love to God, and operative goodwill to all mankind.

Religion, however corrupted, has ſeldom failed in its tender concern for the poor. Even the fourth commandment,

though

though deficient, as to active devotion, was an inſtitution of mercy; extending its influence, not only to the maſters, but to the ſervants, the ſlaves, and the very cattle. And, in their public almſgivings, the hardneſs of the Jewiſh heart was ſoftened towards their own people.

But, of all religions, Chriſtianity ſeems moſt to regard the intereſts of the loweſt orders of ſociety. Its divine author did not conſider mere reſt from work, as ſufficient to ſanctify the ſabbath. No! yet he required his followers to reſt upon it; that the poor, as well as the rich, might have the goſpel preached unto them; that goſpel which brings life and immortality to light, and which inſpires the ſure and certain hope, "that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory." *

* II. Corin. 4. 17.

This is a conſolation, which riches can never give, and which poverty ſhould never take away. The Apoſtle ſays, our affliction, in this world, is light and but for a moment; for what is time to eternity? And what are the greateſt ſufferings in this world, compared to thoſe, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched? Temporal miſeries, if rightly conſidered, inſtead of furniſhing complaints againſt providence, ſhould ſupply arguments in its ſupport. For if there be a good God—and his goodneſs is as demonſtrable as his being—he will finally vindicate his ways to man; and will not permit the robber, the adulterer, the ſlanderer, the murderer, and oppreſſor of the poor, to ſleep with equal honours, in the duſt, with the righteous, the temperate, the humane, the merciful, and the charitable, who ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.

Whilſt

Whilſt this bright proſpect lies before him, let not the poor man murmur againſt providence; rather let him look back upon his own paſt life, and diſpaſſionately reflect, how he has managed his time, his talents and opportunities. And if, on this review, he may perhaps diſcover, that he has not uſed any one of theſe to the beſt advantage, then let him candidly blame his own miſmanagement, and not find faults in the management of providence.

If we take the Bible's word for it, " the rich and poor meet together, the Lord is maker of them all." * He not only made the perſons, but the conditions, of both poor and rich. This would have been true, if the bible had never ſaid it; and the bible only ſays it, becauſe the thing is true. The rich and poor meet together, *i. e.* they

* Prov. 22. 2.

form one ſociety; they mix in the intercourſe of life, and, by a mutual interchange of good offices, promote the greateſt poſſible happineſs of all. It is the divine will, executed by nature, that there ſhould be different claſſes, and degrees, in every well-regulated community. For as the human frame is compoſed of many members, and cannot be all eye, or all hand, ſo in the ſocial body, all cannot be magiſtrates and maſters; ſome muſt be ſubjects and ſervants; ſome for the plough and the ſpade, and others for the ſword and the ſceptre. The king himſelf is ſerved of the field; but who, I aſk, would dig, if all were kings?

As well might we ſuppoſe, that an army could hold together, and be victorious, without officers and diſcipline, as that civil ſociety could exiſt and be proſperous, without magiſtrates and ſubordination. By the diſparity of ranks and inequality of conditions, the order

der and harmony of the world is maintained. If you break in upon this arrangement, all is diſcord and diſorder.

If we quit ſcripture, and betake ourſelves to profane hiſtory, the writers of it all refer to times of confuſion and anarchy; when the weaker, oppreſſed by the ſtronger, only preſerved a precarious exiſtence, by joining with a party; till, at length, common intereſt pointed out one, who had obtained an aſcendancy, as a common arbiter of differences; veſted with certain powers conducive to the peace and welfare of all.

If, again, we travel into newly diſcovered countries, and explore the haunts of ſavage men; does not the inequality of the animal meet us at every turn? Some excel in the powers of the body, and others in the faculties of the mind; one ſtrong and active; another feeble and ſlow; one lively

lively and perceptive, another dull and undiſcerning. What tribe ſo uncultured, as not to have its chief, its councellor, its orator? Shew any two ſavages, perfectly equal, in the talents both of body and mind. The weaker muſt ſubmit to the ſtronger, and every thing, but folly, will bow to ſuperior wiſdom.

Does not nature, or rather the God of nature, by this unequal diſpenſation of talents, point to an inequality of claſſes, a diſparity of conditions, among the ſons of men? But does not nature, through all her works, diſplay ſubordination? In the vegetable and animal worlds, not only the various tribes, but the individuals of each tribe, riſe in excellence, each above each: ſo that there appears to be an aſcending ſcale of beings, from inanimate matter up to unbodied ſpirit.

This voice of nature, which declares the handy-work of God, may for

for a while be ſtifled, but it will, at length, be heard. For let us ſuppoſe that, in defiance of this warning voice, a ſociety could be eſtabliſhed on the moſt levelling ſyſtem of political equality, it could not long remain in that ſituation: Elaſtic nature would ſoon recover its original tone; the natural inequality of man would not fail to diſcover itſelf; the prodigal would ſpend, and the frugal would ſpare; the indolent would grow poorer, and the induſtrious richer; ſo that, in every line, talents would exalt the poſſeſſor, and the want of them ſink the individual, below the common level. This is ſo true, that it has been, over and over, obſerved, that ſome men do, by nature, as far excel others, as thoſe others do brutes.

The doctrine of man's natural equality, * conceived by ſpeculation, in the wrath

* See, at the end, Note 1.

wrath of nature, muſt, like the illuſions of perſpective, vaniſh at the touch, even of women and children; who are, themſelves, its conſtant refutation. And I ſhould have been aſhamed, at having dwelt ſo long on its falſity, were it not laid down, as the firſt, and irrefragable, principle of certain viſionary ſyſtems; ſurprizing the unwary, inſnaring the ſhrewd, and enflaming the multitude, ever hoſtile to ſubordination.

But it will be ſaid, that, though men be naturally unequal, nature has inveſted them with equal * rights; let us, therefore examine, what degree of plauſibility there is in this aſſertion.

It is true, that the ſame power, which willed the creation of man, willed alſo his preſervation: for, in one ſenſe, preſervation may be conſidered as creation continued. The Creator gave man

* See Note 2.

man light, air, water, the earth, and its fruits, to uſe and to enjoy; ſo far as each individual could uſe and enjoy them, for his preſervation and comfort, without prejudice to others, his fellow-men. Of this primitive ſtate it has been ſaid, with equal truth and equal falſhood, that every man had a right to every thing, and that no man had a right to any thing.

Light and air muſt ever be, as they have ever been, in commonage: but it is hard to believe, however atteſted (for not every propoſition is ſuſceptible of human teſtimony) that any people were ever yet in ſuch a ſavage ſtate of ſociety, as to be deſtitute of all notions of property. It neceſſarily follows, from the unequal ſizes, ages, and organization of different men, that one man would require more of the ſpontaneous fruits of the earth than another, for his nouriſhment and ſupport; it, therefore, is the indication of nature,

that one ſhould have more than another, to carry on its plan of preſervation.

But, from the difference of tempers and diſpoſitions in different men, it is alſo conſecutive, that ſome would be for arrogating to themſelves more than an equal ſhare; and that others would complain, that this was not conſiſtent with their common and equal rights. Would it not then be anſwered, I gathered thoſe acorns, I caught that deer, I encloſed that piece of ground, I ſunk that hole for a well, that I might have water: my labour is as much mine as my limbs, by the uſe of which I have ſevered thoſe articles from the common fund; and, by thus adding ſomething to them they had not before, I have attached to them a private right, and annexed them to myſelf as property.

Thus would men virtually ſpeak, and really act, before the inſtitution of ſome adventitious ſtate of ſociety, before any form of government was ſuper-

induced.

induced. Far be it, however, from me to ſay, that even in ſuch a rude ſtate, a man's labour, employed, as above ſet forth, would inveſt him with property to any great extent; or that the mere encloſing ground would intitle the firſt occupier, to any large ſcope of it. No! for right muſt always refer to the public good, and, in that caſe, ſhould be limited by what the occupier can uſe and enjoy, without detriment to others. But who is to be judge and arbiter of the public good? And what is to be the limit of a man's uſe and enjoyment?

Behold then the benefit of human laws.* Theſe are they which protect us, in the uſe and enjoyment of thoſe bleſſings and advantages, over ſavages, which civilized nations boaſt of. Without theſe, what is to ſecure the property, which your induſtry has honeſtly

 acquired?

* *Legum idcirco ſervi ſumus, ut liberi eſſe poſſimus.* CICERO.

acquired? Without theſe, you have nothing to preſerve you, or yours, but your own ſtrength. So that if a ſtronger man than you coveted your poſſeſſions, your labour, your induſtry, your title, availed you nothing. But what are laws without obedience? Here then you may ſee that your duty to obedience is enforced by the ſtrongeſt motives of ſelf-intereſt.

If men were by nature equal, there would have been no occaſion for human laws; for each man would have been his own protector againſt his equal—Equality of powers, in each man's hand, would, in effect, have tied up each hand of violence: So that there would have been none of thoſe ſanguinary concuſſions, which tempted Hobbes, and others, to call the ſtate of nature a ſtate of war. But though there have been Cains and Abels, in in conſtant ſucceſſion, from the beginning; and though there never will be wanting

wanting, Iſhmaels, whoſe hand will be againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him; and, of courſe, though power can never * make right, it will for ever take it. Yet, ſuch is the prepollence of the benevolent, above the malignant, affections, in moſt men, it can only be concluded, that fightings were once as frequent as lawſuits are at preſent.

But be that as it may, it is, on all ſides, agreed, that it was becauſe of aggreſſion that laws were originally made, and that it was, as an aſſylum from oppreſſion that governments were at firſt and laſt conſtituted. The laws are the ſhield and buckler of the weak againſt the ſtrong, of the ſimple againſt the crafty, of the poor againſt the rich; and they may be, figuratively, called every man's hand againſt the Iſhmaels of the world. The very exiſtence of human laws involves in it an acknowledgement of the inequality of man; becauſe

* See Note 3.

becauſe they were, and are, made as a redreſs for that inequality; and as the beſt remedy for phyſical imbecillity.

Wherever law is ſovereign in any land, as it happily is in theſe iſlands, there is a perfect equality of rights, however unequal the perſons and property, protected by that law, may be. Societies did not ſubmit to government to be in a worſe ſtate than that of rude nature. No! but to be in a better; to have the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of their own induſtry, and of every right compatible with the greateſt aggregate of general happineſs. It is this ſovereignty of laws, and this alone, which equalizes the rights of man in every well regulated ſtate. This brings the king and the beggar upon a perfect level, in reſpect of rights. For as the one enjoys a perfect right to his ſceptre, ſo the other does to his ſtaff.

Obſerve

Obſerve further—Wherever this ſovereignty of law prevails, there alſo is perfect civil liberty, viz. all that power of acting according to our own will, which does not claſh with the welfare of others. If laws are reſtraints, they are only ſuch upon the wayward, the licentious, the unruly wills of men; who are ſometimes ſo diſobedient to the laws of their own nature, that they are not only enemies to one another, but to themſelves. Any other ſyſtem of liberty and equality, * than that which is founded upon chearful obedience to the ſovereignty of law, forms a frightful climax of flippant nonſenſe, ſullen diſcontent, perpetual tumult, and either outrageous anarchy or ferocious inſurrection.

A horrible example of this criminal gradation has, of late, been exhibited to aſtoniſhed Europe. We have not yet

* *Qui aliter jus civile tradunt, non tam juſtitiæ, quam litigandi, tradunt vias.* CICERO.

yet proceeded ſo far in enormities, and, I truſt, we ſhall go no farther. But wherefore ſhould we have moved a ſingle ſtep? Wherefore grow ſullen, after being reſtored to our liberties, both commercial and civil? Wherefore become diſcontented, at a time when we had got into the habit of meliorating our conſtitution, by conſtitutional means? We were advancing rapidly in religious toleration; and our tillage, our trade, our population *, had riſen to a height, as far above our expectations of the future, as our experience of the paſt. Yet, at ſuch a time, at the bright dawn of ſucceſsful induſtry, was that goodly proſpect of proſperity overcaſt, by lowering clouds of tumult, faction, and diſaffection. And all for what? Becauſe a political comet had ſhed its portentous influence on the Continent.

But

* See Note 4.

But, if a people galled by the yoke of deſpotiſm, ſhall throw off their chains, and then run mad—for oppreſſion will make even a wiſe man mad—if ſuch a people, in a paroxiſm of frenzy, ſhall cry, havock, and let looſe the dogs of diaboliſm, is that a reaſon why a people, nurtured in the lap of liberty, and who never felt an arbitrary reſtraint, ſhould hunt their conſtitution down? O wretched imitation!

Then, we were told, we had no conſtitution; and we believed it, becauſe we did not underſtand it. And, then, we began to find out, that, inſtead of freemen, we were ſlaves; that every organ of the ſtate was out of tune; and that our government was ſo corrupt, that it could only be ſaved by a political regeneration. And who were to have been the ſaviours of their country? Not thoſe "learned men, deſcribed by the wiſe ſon of Sirach, whoſe wiſdom cometh by opportunity

of leiſure ; but men who glory in the goad, and whoſe talk is of bullocks, —men who truſt in their hands, the carpenter, the ſmith, and the potter, every one of whom may be wiſe in his work, and without whom the city cannot be inhabited—but who ſhall not be ſought for in council, nor ſit high in the congregation, neither ſhall they be found where parables are ſpoken." *

If we are ſick we ſend for a phyſician; if our property is invaded we apply to a lawyer: but nobody, now a-days, diſtruſts his own ſkill in the art of politicks, the moſt difficult of all arts. Every man is ſo wiſe in his own conceit, that all would govern, but none obey. But an Athenian legiſlator provided, by a law, that no man ſhould have any ſhare in the government, who had not firſt given ſome ſpecimen

* Eccleſ. xxxviii.

ſpecimen of his ſkill in the management of his own affairs. And his reaſon was excellent—how is it poſſible, ſaid he, that a man who cannnot govern one houſe, ſhould be able to govern thouſands?

But what was the conſequence of this inverſion of public order? you all know it; and ſome, alas! feel it. From that proud eminence, above any other period, to which our country had ariſen, it, in one little year, ſunk into the loweſt ebb of diſtreſs; a general failure of credit; mercantile bankruptcy; poverty in our houſes, and beggary in our ſtreets and high-ways.

But, let us now draw the veil over paſt miſconduct; let us pour the balm of conſolation into thoſe wounds, which it unfortunately has made. And though it be my duty to "exhort and rebuke with all authority,"* yet God forbid

* Tit. ii. 15.

that any thing, which has fallen from me, ſhould irritate one honeſt heart. I truſt to the good ſenſe, and kind diſpoſitions, of you, my brethren, who, after twenty years reſidence amongſt you, have acquired the habit of always excuſing the zealous effuſions of my ſanguine mind.

Being, however, perſuaded that much of our preſent diſtreſſes has been occaſioned by miſguided opinions; and as *all* the miſeries of mankind do not affect the *body* alone, it was my wiſh to eraſe ſuch falſe impreſſions on the *mind*, as ſeem to have contributed moſt largely to thoſe diſtreſſes. For, however liberally your bounties may flow, were they even as rich and abundant, as your inclinations may be kind and merciful, yet all the portions, we can ſend, ſhould not be compared to the knowledge of our duties, as men and citizens.

But political opinions are not the only ones which diſturb and vex mankind.

kind. There are ſome, particularly regarding the poor, which I ſhould alſo wiſh to rectify; leſt, to the real evils which they ſuffer, they (as well as the rich) ſhould ſuperadd ſuch as are merely fictitious and imaginary.

When I ſpeak of poor and rich, at preſent, I conſider mankind as divided into thoſe two general claſſes, without referring to the extremes of either. Now, I am not ignorant, that it will be difficult, if not impoſſible, to perſuade the poor, who (in that view) make up the bulk of mankind, that the happineſs of this life is not annexed to high ſtation, and the want of it to their own. Nevertheleſs, I am perſuaded, this opinion is falſe, as to the fact, and impious, as it regards the divine adminiſtration.

That there ſhould be a diſtinction of ranks, in ſociety, is agreeable to the wiſdom of God, but that equal happineſs ſhould be attainable, in each rank

rank, is agreeable to his goodneſs. I have ſhewn that ſubordination, among citizens, is as neceſſary, as among ſoldiers; yet it does not follow, that the general is more happy than the colonel, the colonel than the captain, the captain than the enſign, the enſign than the private man.

"Has not the potter power over the clay of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another to diſhonour? Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus?" * Let not the poor repine at their lot in life. Happineſs, or the want of it, belongs, not to ſtations, but to perſons. And what perſon is exempted from miſery? "Although affliction cometh not forth of the duſt, neither doth ſorrow ſpring out of the ground, yet man is born to trouble as the ſparks fly upwards." †

This

* Rom. ix. 21.

† Job v. 27.

This was a leſſon which ſad experience taught King Solomon. "The ſleep of a labouring man, ſaid he, is ſweet, but the abundance of the rich, will not ſuffer them to reſt." He ſought for knowledge, for pleaſure, for power, and for wealth, yet every purſuit terminated in vanity and vexation of ſpirit. Another Eaſtern monarch offered a high reward to the inventor of a new pleaſure; ſo ſatiated was he with all that he had yet tried. Now, was not this jaded ſenſualiſt more unhappy than moſt of his ſubjects?

The rich have a thouſand imaginary wants, of which the poor have not ſo much as a conception. Nor ſhould it be ſuppoſed, that all is happineſs which wealth can give, or art invent? That equipage, which rolls along in ſuch ſplendor, may be only the vehicle of miſery. Weak nerves, a ſhattered conſtitution, a mortgaged eſtate, diſappointed ambition, pining jealouſy, rankling revenge, or conſcious guilt, may be wringing

wringing the ſouls, and agonizing the hearts of all within it; whilſt the only pleaſure is in the retinue and cavalcade.

When you behold the ſolemn proceſſion of ſome great funeral; the lofty hearſe, the nodding plumes, the emblazoned ſcutcheons, the cypreſſed pall, the long train of mourners, and all the other pageantry of pride; would you pronounce the ſoul happy, for having its body carried to the grave in ſuch magnificence?

If it be argued, that the poor, ſometimes, die for want, let it be remembered, how many of the rich die from exceſs; how many are put to death for their poſſeſſions; how many princes are dethroned, baniſhed, impriſoned, poiſoned, aſſaſſinated. But let it not be forgotten, that I was not yet ſpeaking of the extremes of either claſs; I was only alluding to the two great bodies which lie between. And it could eaſily be ſhewn,

if

if this were a place for it, that, in ſeveral caſes, the poor are on a level with the rich, in point of enjoyment; and, in ſome, that they have the advantage; but I ſhall only inſtance one, of this deſcription.

When do we hear of a poor man's child wiſhing for his parents death, that he may get poſſeſſion of the eſtate, or of the jointure? A failure of filial affection is rarely heard of, among the poor. Gold or ſilver they have not, but ſuch as they have they freely give, to their aged parents. They generally divide, to the laſt crumb, though earned by the hardeſt induſtry. Anxious days and ſleepleſs nights are to them a luxury, when endured for the welfare of their friends, or even neighbours. They forſake them not in their anguiſh; they hang over them in their ſick-beds; they pour conſolation into their drooping ſpirits; they drop the falling tear; they give them water to

drink; and that water becomes a cordial, when miniſtered by ſuch hands. Not all the treaſures of wealth can purchaſe ſuch a cordial, from mercenary hands.

Let not the poor, then, ſo much envy the rich. They have evils enow to complain of, without adding, this baſe paſſion, to the catalogue of their miſeries. You ſhould rather conſole yourſelves with the reflection, that the magnificence, the luxury, the extravagance, and, I may add, the very follies of high ſtation, all work together for your good, and all contribute to your ſupport and comfort.

That houſe, built at ſuch expenſe, is not ſimply a lodging for the owner, it is a bank ſet up, for induſtry to draw upon; it is a fund added to the common ſtock; it is the wages of the labourer and mechanick. That domain, improved with ſo much care, gives pleaſure not only to the poſſeſſor, but to the

the paſſenger; and it holds out, to hundreds, their daily bread: Thoſe fine linens, thoſe rich ſilks, thoſe gaudy laces, ſet the looms to work: That coſtly furniture, that ſuperb ſideboard, thoſe animated ſtatutes, thoſe ſpeaking pictures, and all thoſe high embelliſhmets of taſte, which ſome call ſuperfluities, are, nevertheleſs, the prime engines of induſtry; they are the mainſprings, which ſet the different orders of ſociety in motion, and give life and energy to the arts; they create commerce at home and trade abroad; they cultivate the country, build the town, and people the city: In fine, they diffuſe all thoſe benefits which, in this life, dignify and exalt the human character, and elevate civilized nations ſo high, above the rude, the barbarous, and the ſavage. *

Theſe are among the many advantages, which naturally flow from a ſubordination of ranks; as the life-blood

* See Note 5.

from the heart, which paſſing through the ducts and channels of the members, cheriſhes and invigorates the whole body. And theſe are advantages, which never can be enjoyed in a ſtate of equality; if ſuch a ſtate, even among ſavages, could, but for a moment, be ſuppoſed to exiſt.

Thus far have I laboured to ſet your opinions right, on ſubjects, which are ſo intimately connected with the happineſs of man in general, and of ourſelves in particular. The diſeaſes of the mind are generally more painful than thoſe of the body, and ſeldom admit of ſo eaſy a cure. "The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmities; but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?" And if I have been ſo ſucceſsful in my narrow ſphere, as to eraſe but one falſe impreſſion, from one well-diſpoſed mind, I ſhould flatter myſelf that I had done ſome ſervice. It now remains that I ſay a few words, more particularly to the

the announced purpoſe of our meeting here to-day; which was, to relieve the *bodily* wants of the loweſt orders of our people.

I ſhall not attempt practiſing on your feelings, on the preſent occaſion. The objects, which it means to ſerve, are not expoſed to your view; they are not ſpectacles to catch your eye, excite your commiſeration, and extort your relief. No! But they are, nevertheleſs, objects, whoſe claim to aſſiſtance is much more juſt and reaſonable, than of thoſe who beg from door to door; who expoſe their nakedneſs and their ſores, on the high-ways to fairs and markets; and whoſe fictitious poverty attacks us, like an armed man, in our ſtreets.

It is well known, that begging is made a trade of in this kingdom. Parents, ſometimes, give up their houſes and ſubſtance to their children, and go a begging themſelves: and it frequently

quently happens, that, in the ſummer, the huſbands quit their families, go to other countries for higher wages, leaving their wives and children to ſhift for themſelves; who, thus, betake themſelves to this trade; which is attended with no general infamy, becauſe it is ſo common.

But mark the pernicious conſequences of this practice. The induſtry of theſe vagrants is is not only loſt to the community; but their maintenance becomes a heavy burden on the induſtrious part of it. And what is worſt of all, their morals are corrupted; the children become, not only idle, but vitious; for, as it is remarked of thoſe who have been confined in priſons, that they always come out, more corrupt and profligate, than when they went in; ſo it is here. They return to their homes, with a diſinclination to labour, and a propenſity to get their livelihood by more eaſy means.

As

As a remedy for this vagrant diſeaſe, an act of parliament was paſſed here above twenty years ago; authorizing each county in the kingdom to build houſes of induſtry, for confining theſe ſtrolling beggars; obliging thoſe to work who are able, and for maintaining thoſe who were not. But this law has not been executed, except in Dublin, and two or three other great towns. The conſequence has been, that the number of vagrants, upon the whole, has not been diminiſhed: For upon thinning the ſtreets of Dublin of thoſe ſwarms of them, which infeſted that charitable city, new hives poured in, from the country, to fill up the gap; ſo that malignants have been wont to ſay, that Dublin holds out premiums for begging.

But, had houſes of induſtry been built in each county, this could not have happened. The country vagrants would

would have been arreſted, in their march to the capital: where the nuiſance of beggars is little leſs, than when the law was made againſt them; notwithſtanding the vaſt ſums, which the nation annually grants for their ſupport.

If this inſtitution then has failed, in producing its *full* effects, it is not becauſe the law was not a good one; but becauſe it was, perhaps, too good for us. We were not yet ripe for it; our prejudices having overpowered our underſtandings. But, having had a ſufficient interval for reflection, we ſhould not, now, grudge a ſmall tax being levied on each county, to animate this law, which is become, almoſt, a dead letter. It would not coſt, each houſekeeper, as much as he now gives to going beggars; it would ſoon put thoſe people into diſrepute and diſgrace, who prefer begging to working; and would render the exiſting law an operative

ative principle of induſtry and good conduct.

We all know what good has been done, by county infirmaries. But it is the praiſe of this country, to be ſeldom wanting, in diſcharging the duties of mere compaſſion. Hoſpitals have been founded, for the ſick, for the wounded, for the lame, for the blind, for the old, and for the young, for women to bring forth, and for the children yet unborn.

Beſides many inſtitutions, of this kind, in England, and others I cannot enumerate, that richeſt of all great countries, pays annually for the ſupport of her poor, (what may poſſibly ſurprize ſome of you), more than double the whole revenues of this poor kingdom; and within twenty years it payed more than treble. Not that her poor rates are diminiſhed, but that our national income is vaſtly increaſed. Yet heavy complaints are made there,

every day, of the miſapplication of that immenſe fund. As what can be deviſed, or executed, that ſomebody will not find a flaw in.

But, of all the modes, ever yet deviſed, I never yet heard of one more efficacious, not only as a remedy, but as a prevention of poverty, than that which now ſolicits your attention, patronage and ſupport. The perſons, we would now ſuccour and relieve, are thoſe, who—having, during a courſe of honeſt induſtry, endeavoured to ſupport their credit, and anſwer the juſt demands upon them—feel themſelves, perhaps, more pinched by want, than thoſe who crave your alms. For who can, at all times, weather out the ſtorms of ill fortune, or combat the calamities of ſickneſs, or of ſeaſons? The general failure ofcredit, or the particnlar failure of punctuality in debtors, may drive ſome, into unforeſeen diſtreſs. Some, or all, of thoſe cauſes may combine,

to

to drive an honeſt man to extremity; to the door, the door of his own houſe; to which he ſtill clings, (as the mariner to the laſt plank of his ſinking veſſel) and embraces it, as his laſt reſort and refuge; aſhamed to knock at the door of his neighbour, to make known his ſituation, much leſs to aſk ſhare of that cake, which, however well diſpoſed that neighbour may be to give, he has hardly provided, as a ſcanty pittance for his own wife and children.

Such are the perſons for whom we now plead! Men and women, who wiſh to keep their houſes over their heads; who, trembling between hope and deſpair, ſtand upon the very verge of ruin; who, like perſons a drowning, if they receive but the ſmalleſt aſſiſtance, emerge from the waters, return to the light and air, and become uſeful and honourable members of ſociety.

Conſider, I pray, you, whom providence has diſtinguiſhed with wealth, that theſe are no common objects, no mendicants, who uſe diſhoneſt arts to move your paſſions, and excite your compaſſion. Compaſſion is, I know, one of the nobleſt feelings of the heart; it was implanted for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes; it was beſtowed on us to enforce duty, by the pleaſure of inclination. It was mingled with the clay of humanity, to temper it for benevolent action and generous giving; to furniſh power and opportunity with the wiſh, and with the will, to do good; to give quickneſs to tardineſs; that we might run to diſtreſs, to protect, to reſtore, to heal. In fine, it is that prompt inſtinct, which may be called the Deity's meſſenger from within, which carries the diſpatches of the all-wiſe, all-great and all-good author of nature. It is, on earth, what the angels are, in heaven, God's miniſters that do his

his pleaſure, and are ever on the wing at his command.

But, if this impulſe, like moſt others, be not regulated by reaſon, it can be only called a fine feeling, a milkineſs of blood; which no more deſerves the praiſe of a virtue, than our weeping at the repreſentation of a tragedy. Nay, compaſſion, *miſplaced*, may degenerate into a vice. No nation, under heaven, was ever yet more highly gifted, with all the tender ſenſibilities of humanity, than that to which I have the honour to belong. Yet dont we, every day, lament the unhappy turn, which pity takes among us? Are not the feelings of the multitude generally engaged in oppoſition to juſtice? If a malefactor is purſued, do not the people wiſh that he may eſcape? Do they not ſcreen him in the moſt hidden corner? And if, peradventure, he be carried to execution, is not the ſtrong hand of power always obliged to guard againſt a reſcue?

The

The impulſes of pity, ſo far from being indulged, on all occaſions, are, ſometimes, to be checked and controlled. Yet, without this divine inſtinct, man becomes a monſter. Faith, hope and charity, theſe three, but the greateſt of theſe is charity. Charity is goodwill, and good deeds, to all mankind. Charity comprizes the whole duty of man. It is charity, which covers the multitude of ſins. But though all charity may partake of compaſſion, yet all compaſſion may not partake of charity; and certainly it is not the grace itſelf. Charity is the tree; compaſſion is but a branch; but it is one of the faireſt and goodlieſt which ſprings from the ſtock; it ſpreads out ſhelter to all that are in diſtreſs, it covers the naked with its leaves, and it feeds the hungry with its fruits.

He, that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; but if, we would be repayed again, this loan muſt paſs, from

from the heart, through the avenues of reaſon and religion. Oh! how eaſy would it be, to paint imaginary ſcenes of woe, and tell a fictitious tale of perſonal diſtreſs, ſo as to melt a feeling heart? But ours is a ſeverer taſk—we have no particular objects to exhibit in the garb of miſery, or deſcribe in all the weeds of wretchedneſs: and pity is, commonly, loſt in generalities. We plead for a deſcription of people, who are not much pitied, becauſe they are not much known; and who are not much known, becauſe their modeſty keeps them within their own houſes.

Are not theſe the people, whom true compaſſion bids us moſt to regard? Here, every ſocial duty conſpires, and co-operates, with chriſtian charity. Here impoſture does not clamour; here our feelings do not deceive.

In this pariſh, are not fewer than ſeven hundred families exempted from paying hearth-money; that is to ſay, not

not worth ten pounds, after diſcharging their juſt debts. Now, how ſubject muſt ſuch perſons be to calamities, where a guinea or two might redeem them from approaching ruin? With the managers of two or three of theſe ſchemes have I been acquainted, and they all agree, that the money thus lent is of more uſe, than if it had been beſtowed.

For if ſo much were beſtowed, it might, indeed, anſwer a momentary purpoſe; but this, the loan anſwers as effectually: whereas, the gift would neither quicken induſtry, nor animate exertion. I ſhall ſuppoſe, that a country gentleman lays out, yearly, from one hundred to a thouſand pounds, in employing labourers; does not this more ſerve the community, than if he had doled away ſo much in alms? It can ſcarcely be doubted; for, if thoſe people were to depend, upon the very ſum they get thus gratuitouſly, they would loſe

their

their habits of induſtry; and there would, in a ſhort time, be no more a trace of the boon, than of the ſnows of laſt year.

And I could eaſily ſhew, were it here neceſſary, that, upon the ſoundeſt maxims of political œconomy, ſums, thus lent out, are of more public utility than ſo much paid to labourers: for ſuppoſe, that a ſet of theſe depend on their daily wages, they are always at the mercy of their employer; as they have no other way of getting a livelihood——and the non-reſidence of a gentleman, for a year, will probably ſet many ſpades idle, for that year; and of couſe the labourer is driven to calamity. It is like knocking away the crutches from a cripple, who inſtantly drops down, having no limbs to ſupport him. Whereas, a fund employed in lending ſmall ſums to induſtrious houſeholders, eſpecially tradeſmen, at the eaſy condition, of repay-

ing one ſeventh part, at the end of five months, and ſo on, in each month, during the remainder of the year—I ſay, a fund, thus employed, is liable to fewer objections than any I have yet heard of:—provided always that it be properly conducted, both by the borrower and the lender.

This mode is not only a remedy, I repeat it, but it is an antidote to poverty; and, in both reſpects, it may be rendered permanent and inexhauſtible; whilſt others are tranſient, and exhauſt the very ſource of liberality. Some others, are like meteors, which blaze, for a while, in a troubled ſky, and then ſink down in darkneſs; but this is like the great luminaries of heaven, which breed bleſſings in their courſe; and, by their periodical returns of light and heat, cheriſh, chear and fertilize the earth.

But

But leaving the merits of this ſcheme to the conſideration of the benevolent and the beneficent, of the compaſſionate and of the charitable, I ſhall only add —Let every one do, as he is diſpoſed in his heart, not grudgingly, nor of neceſſity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

FINIS.

NOTE I.

From this falſe aſſumption the moſt contradictory concluſions have been drawn. One celebrated writer has founded his ſyſtem of abſolute monarchy, upon that equality which he unequivocally aſſerts: "*Sunt igitur omnes homines natura inter ſe æquales.* HOBBES, de Cive.

Another, who has obtained celebrity, rather, by libelling the Engliſh conſtitution, than by framing any new ſyſtem, makes this abſurd poſition,

his corner ſtone, of a level democracy. " *All agree*, ſays he, *in eſtabliſhing one point*, THE UNITY OF MAN; *by which I mean that man is all of one degree, and conſequently that all men are born equal.*"

PAINE's Rights of man.

If a falſe maxim be aſſumed by a writer, and admitted as true by the reader, there is no conſequence, ſo abſurd or pernicious, to which they may not go together. *Prima ſi des, das omnia.* It was an eaſy poſtulate of Archimedes: " give me but a ſpot to ſtand upon, and I will ſhake this earth." But ſuppoſe you could give, this great man, what he thus jocularly demanded, you muſt grant him alſo, that " a lever is an inflexible right line deſtitute of gravity." But ſuch a machine is to be found, no where, but in definitions: for it requires no great ſkill in mechanics to know, that all machines, when increaſed beyond a certain dimenſion, become unmanageable, and, inſtead of acting as powers, bear againſt you as dead weights. But all this comes of carrying abſtractions too far into practical diſquiſitions.

Form what theory you will of democracy, it will only anſwer, on a very ſmall ſcale: for, if virtue muſt, as it is ſaid, be its principle, its extent muſt be limited to the poſſibility, of each member of the ſtate being ſo well known to every other member of it, that his moral qualifications cannot eſcape his notice or knowledge; ſo that power ſhall never be delegated into the hands of vitious men. Which is impoſſible, on a large ſcale. The

paſſions,

paſſions, the habits, the prejudices of mankind are thoſe material impediments, which (as all hiſtory teaches, and all hiſtory ſhould be regarded as experimental politicks) render an extenſive and complicated macine of democracy unmanageable; and will, at length, when perhaps too late, convince the ſpeculative projector, that the lever of government is not an inflexible right line without weight.

It was ſaid of old (I think by Plato) that democracy was not a government, but a market, where authority was bought and ſold.

NOTE II.

"Nunc juris principia videamus—Quocirca vereor committere, ut non bene proviſa & diligenter explorata principia ponantur, nec tamen ut omnibus probentur—nam id fieri non poteſt—ſed iis qui omnia recta atque honeſta per ſe expetenda duxerunt."

If Cicero thus deſpaired of giving univerſal ſatisfaction on the origin of rights, it was becauſe he ſo well underſtood human nature. He knew that the ſubject was too nice, too ſubtile, and too difficult, for all to comprehend it; and that, of thoſe who were capable, few were ſo diveſted of prejudice, as to give it a fair inveſtigation.

When dogmatiſm avers, that all men have, by nature, *equal rights*—Common ſenſe will aſk what is meant by that word *rights?* and if it be found, that,

that, from the firſt annal of literature, to the preſent day, the wiſeſt and the beſt of men have diſagreed in their opinions on this point, ſhould not candor lean to the ſide of ſcepticiſm; at leaſt, till it underſtands the terms.

The word, *rights*, is not only indefinite in its ſignification, but, it is, to this day, diſputed, whether there be any ſnch thing, as right or wrong, by nature. They, who maintain the negative, aſſert, that a ſenſe of right and wrong, an inſtinct approving or diſapproving certain ſentiments, actions, characters, &c. has no place among the human faculties; elſe, ſay they, an uniformity of opinion, concerning the eſſence of virtue and vice, would be univerſal; whereas, there is ſcarcely a vice, which, in ſome age or country, has not been deemed a virtue. The advocates of this opinion maintain, that moral approbation follows the faſhions and inſtitutions of the country we live in; which themſelves have grown out of the climate, the exigencies, or local circumſtances of the country; or have been ſet up by the authority of an arbitrary chieftain, or the unaccountable caprice of the multitude; and, of courſe, that, as right and obligation are correlative terms, our obligation to virtuous conduct can only be ſuperinduced by a ſuperior will.

Now, without recurring to the uſual mode of anſwering this queſtion, viz. that the diſagreement of ages and nations, &c. ariſes, not from the diſagreement in the ſenſe of right and wrong, but

in

in the opinion of what is moſt conducive to common utility; for that all ages and nations uniformly approve what they conceive to be for the public good, and diſapprove the contrary:—I ſay, without recurring to this mode, which will be more or leſs perſuaſive, according to different habits and diſpoſitions, I ſhall take a ſhorter way, in diſpoſing of the queſtion.——The queſtion is—Had man, in the primitive ſtate of ſociety (in which he, is ſuppoſed to have, exiſted, before any adventitious regulations were ſuperinduced, or, in other words) before laws were made, any ideas of right and wrong? The anſwer is deciſive—He had: elſe human laws could never have been made; as muſt be evident from the very nature of law: Law is a præcept, with a ſanction—the præcept is a moral propoſition, commanding ſome good to be done, or ſome evil to be avoided. Ideas of right and wrong muſt, therefore, have been antecedent to the addition of the ſanction: And, indeed, it may well be aſked, wherefore were laws originally made, but to oblige all men, as far as poſſible, to do right, and to avoid wrong?

Ideas of right and wrong, being coeval with the human mind—"*quæ ſæculis omnibus ante nata eſt quam ſcripta lex ulla, aut quam omnino civitas conſtituta*"—it follows, that ideas of property, or *meum & tuum*, muſt alſo have exiſted from the bginning; and, if the idea exiſted, the thing itſelf muſt have exiſted alſo, for how could they have

have the idea without the object? But how faint, how vague, and uncertain, muſt the ideas of that property have been; when the acquirement and poſſeſſion of it depended upon individual ſtrength? Yet upon this unſettled foundation are we to build the doctrine of rights. No wonder that ſo many different and oppoſite ſyſtems have been framed, when the terms uſed are altogether indefinite. Let us therefore now try; whether the meaning of this fugitive term may not be fixed: And to make the attempt would have been vain, till it had been proved, that mankind had ideas of right and wrong prior to any human compact.

The queſtion, therefore, to be now anſwered is, what meaneth the term, *rights?* If right be defined a claim to the performance of a duty—then it will be aſked, what is *duty?* If it be anſwered, that duty is ſomewhat which ought to be done, or a debt which ſhould be paid; then it will be enquired, what is the correſpondent *obligation?* is it natural or adventitious? is it perfect or imperfect? To which we anſwer, that the natural obligation is an inſtinct correſponding to that *inchoata intelligentia*, or ſenſe of duty, in the firſt offices of life (of which Cicero * ſpeaks) which, when matured, becomes the *ſumma ratio, inſita in natura, quæ jubet ea quæ facienda ſunt, prohibetque contraria.*—This natural obligation, being imperfect, adventitious obligations were ſuperinduced by poſitive laws, that man might not be left to diſcretionary motives, in the

* With whom agree, though differing in words, Hutcheſon in his *moral ſenſe*, Clarke in his perception of *fitneſs*, Wollaſton of *truth*, Shaftſbury of *beauty*, &c. &c.

the diſcharge of his duty. So that whatever man's claims may be, his rights cannot be called perfect, till they become legal. Laws do not create rights, they only regulate, guard, and aſcertain them. And till it can be ſhewn, that equal duties belong to all men, it can never be proved that all men have equal rights in any ſtate whatever; farther than to the equal protection of known laws, as ſet forth in the foregoing diſcourſe.

But what can be more abſurd than to ſuppoſe, that equal duties belong to all men? Was it ever a duty incumbent on all, or any, to pay equal reſpect to the fooliſh and the wiſe—to the coward and to the brave? Now, if the duties to theſe oppoſite characters were not equal, ſo neither could their claims or rights be equal.

NOTE III.

Power is a phyſical, and right a moral, quality; and between eſſences, thus diſtinct, there cannot ſubſiſt the relationſhip of cauſe and effect. If right could be ſuppoſed to be the effect of power, the immutable nature of right and wrong would vary, according to the phyſical momentum of force. For if a power be ſtrong enough to change the poſſeſſion of a property, then the right would follow the power, as the effect its cauſe. Of courſe, weakneſs would be diveſted of all its rights; and there would be as many rights, as powers to claim them. Then any villain, with a dagger or piſtol at my breaſt, would acquire a right over my perſon and property, if he can ſubdue me; and I, if weaker, would have no right to reſiſt

 him;

him; becauſe it is ſuppoſed, that the right is decided by the prepollence of force.

But, though it be, thus, demonſtratively certain, that power can never convey right as a cauſe, yet it is equally certain, that all ſocieties, whether natural or adventitious, are governed by power. By this the father governs the child, the huſband the wife, and the maſter the family. A family is a ſtate in miniature. Here commences ſubordination; mankind, even in its moſt rude and ſavage ſtate, has been always found in ſociety. Man, the animal, may have been diſcovered in ſolitude, but Man, the ſpecies, is ſocial. He clings to his kind for mutual comfort, but he ſubmits to government for mutual protection—But, without enquiring, here, how political ſocieties were originally conſtituted or governed, this one thing is indiſputable; that let the executive power be lodged where it may, the firſt magiſtrate bears a ſword, though not always a ſceptre: Or, in other words, all ſocieties, whatever, are actually governed by force, without being much controlled by principles of metaphyſicks.

The ſame concluſion follows from the very nature of law, which, as we have already ſhewn, always contains in it ſomething moral and ſomething phyſical. The præcept, commanding ſome good to be done, or ſome evil to be avoided, is merely moral; the ſanction, whether of penalty or reward, is altogether phyſical. When, therefore, it is ſaid, that all ſocieties are governed by force, it may only ſignify, that they are governed by the phyſical power of law.

And

And do not all thoſe admit ſo much, in effect, who admit, that ſociety, at large, is to be concluded by the will of the majority? for what avails the will of the majority, if it be not enforced by the ſtrength of the majority?

But how inconſiſtently do they argue, who, after admitting, that the whole is to be concluded by the majority, will, in the ſame breath, deny, that they are bound to obey any law, to which they have not given their conſent, either by themſelves or their repreſentatives? For (ſetting aſide the women, one half the ſpecies) almoſt one half of the men may, upon their own principle, be governed, not only by laws, to which they did not give their conſent, but by laws againſt which they have either actually, or virtually, voted.

Behold, now, the circle in which theſe theoriſts perpetually revolve. They tell you, that in order to frame this new-fangled conſtitution of theirs, the nation muſt meet in its original character, and be decided by the votes of the majority. But man cannot be in his original character, if he has entered into any compact whatever; and here he is ſuppoſed to come forward under the moſt important compact, involving in itſelf the main end of that conſtitution they would form. For what is it, that democracy would aim at, but that the majority ſhould conclude the whole?

Upon ſuch a ſelf-contradictory ſyſtem, it might, indeed, be truly ſaid, that England has no conſtitution—And we may add, that, as no other country ever had a conſtitution, in that ſenſe of the word, it would not be raſh to predict, that no

country ever will. But, if it be the eſſence of a good conſtitution, that every member of the community, the governors and governed, be alike ſubject to known laws, ſo that the higheſt ſhall not tranſgreſs them with impunity, then let us rejoice, that our conſtitution was not ſtruck out in a heat, the heat of ſpeculation; but gradually framed by the matured experience of ages.

Of all great ſtates, the world has yet ſeen, England exhibits a model of government, approaching neareſt that ideal perfection, which phyloſophy may conceive, but muſt acknowledge, is incompatible with the imperfection of all human things. However let hiſtory tell, or experience ſhew any other country, where every condition of men did or does exhibit ſo pleaſing a picture of the dignity and happineſs of human nature. And if this be not the beſt criterion of a good political conſtitution, let madneſs uſurp the throne of wiſdom.

When innovation talks of recurring to the primitive principles of the conſtitution, in the glorious days of king Alfred, it ſeems to have forgot the real ſtate of the nation, at that time. It is utterly ſilent on the ſervitude, under which a vaſt majority of the people then groaned, in every country of Europe; and from which they are not yet, in ſome of them, altogether emancipated. But, in theſe iſlands, the peaſants were as much the property of the lord, as the cattle, or other ſtock on the grounds. And did they not ſell their very children, for ſlaves, in like manner as the negroes of Guinea do at preſent?

NOTE

NOTE IV.

	£.	s.	d.
In the ſeven years ending March 25, 1777, the average value of corn, meal, flour, &c. exported from Ireland was - -	64871	—	—
In the ſeven years ending March 25, 1791, the average of ditto was	415645	—	—
In the two years ſince, ending March 25, 1793, the average value of ſaid articles is computed at near - -	600000	—	—

Thus prodigious (near ten-fold,) has been the increaſe of exported grain, ſince we obtained a free trade—But if we go back to the Duke of Bedford's adminiſtration (when the bounty on land carriage to Dublin was all we could obtain) ſo far were we from exporting, that we annually ſent out of the kingdom, for the articles above enumerated, between three and four hundred thouſand pounds—ſo that by adding this ſum, paid for imported grain, to our preſent export, it may be fairly ſaid that the kingdom is more than a million gainer, in agriculture alone, ſince the year 1755.

	£.	s.	d.
In the ſeven years ending March 25, 1777, the average value of linens exported was -	1396919	—	—
In the ſeven years ending March 25, 1791, the average value of linens exported amounted to -	2183514	—	—

If we add, to this, the decreaſe of import in the articles of coarſe woollens, and cotton fabricks, now ſupplied

ſupplied by our home manufacture, to the amount, it is ſaid, of more than one half, if not two parts out of three, it may be aſſerted, that few countries have ever been known to improve ſo rapidly for the time—population having at leaſt kept pace with the increaſe of trade—which, perhaps, cannot be ſaid, even of England itſelf, in the ſame period.

NOTE V.

It will not, I truſt, be inferred from the preference here given to a civilized life, that we recommend luxury, in the ſenſe that word is generally received. If mere refinement in the modes of life be called luxury, then it is hard to ſay what deſerves that name. What was luxury in one age, becomes a convenience, perhaps a neceſſary, of life in another. Tea and ſugar were once called luxuries, they are now deemed neceſſaries, by ſervants, and the loweſt order of citizens. Queen Elizabeth, it is ſaid, rode on horſeback to parliament. But a rich Quaker now calls his coach a convenience. *Quæ fuerant vitia, mores ſiunt.* Luxury, we only conſider, as the attribute of a a certain ſtage, in the progreſs of national improvement. And, in any ſtage, the luxury of individuals may be carried to a vitious exceſs. It is always vitious when it ſo enervates the body, or ſoftens the mind, as to make it ſhrink from laudable exertions. But it is not mere refinement which conſtitutes luxury; for as the ſame diſpoſitions are attached to man, in every ſtage of ſociety (whether ſavage, barbarous or civilized) the ſagacious eye will recognize the eating epicure in the gormandizing

gormandizing barbarian, and the pert coxcomb in the feathered and painted ſavage.

It is eaſy to ſee when the luxury of individuals becomes vitious, and when it becomes general, it muſt be a national malady—But the ſureſt way of knowing when national luxury is exceſſive, and of courſe vitious, is, when it tends to depopulation, and damps the ſpirit of national defence. Theſe things I only obſerve, to ſhew that this kingdom is not near that ſtage of ſociety, in which any danger is to be apprehended from national luxury. It was only in the laſt century that ſome writers threw it out, as one expedient for the improvement of Ireland—to inſpire the natives with a reliſh for the luxury of wearing brogues.

What we wiſh for, is to ſee a regular gradation of many ranks in ſociety. Wherever this variety of claſſes ſubſiſts, *there* is order, *there* is ſubordination; *there*, as in a concert of muſical inſtruments, ariſes that harmony of the whole, which compoſes to peace, proſperity and happineſs. But it muſt be lamented, that in many parts of Ireland, the middle ranks of ſociety are wanting; there is a huge gap from the higheſt rank (N.B. one or two men, of middle fortunes in a pariſh, do not form a claſs) to the maſs of the people, who are generally of one degree. And whoever will trace the geography of the late tumults in this kingdom, will find them, violent, only in tracts of this deſcription. At leaſt, this has been the caſe, as far as my own information reaches.

IF it ſhould be aſked, is this heterogeneous diſcourſe a ſermon, or a pamphlet? Is it one, or is it many? It will be anſwered, that unity of ſubject was not originally aimed at. Yet to inculcate the utility of *new churches* and *charitable loans*, was, at firſt, all that was intended. The compoſition, however, affected by the times, took a political turn. And, on reviewing the principles, there laid down, they appear, to a partial eye, as containing a refutation (perhaps too abſtracted) of the delirious doctrines of the natural equality and equal rights of man. Under this impreſſion the diſcourſe is now printed, with all its imperfections on its head.

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